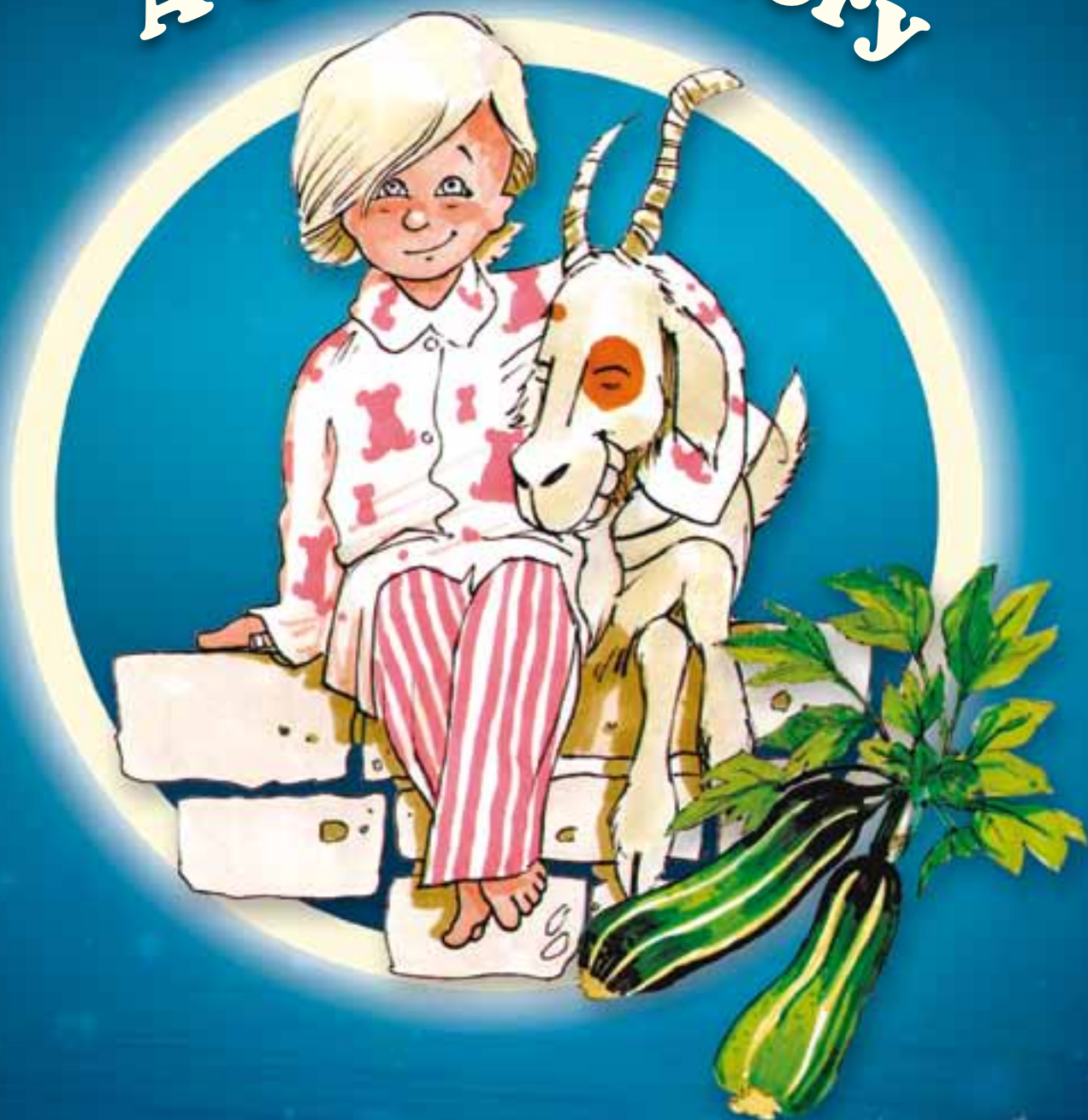


A bedtime story



**from
DryNites®**

Tegan Tanglebulb



**“Higher granny,
higher! I can nearly see.**

Yes, yes, nearly, lift me a bit higher”...

..., as Tegan Tanglebulb teetered on her grandmother’s shoulders and peered over the wall into Henry Weir’s garden, her heart sank. Below her were some of the most enormous courgettes she had ever seen. Looking over them she froze stock still, silent in disappointment. **“Well, how do they look?”** whispered her grandmother, straining as she lowered Tegan back down to the ground. **“They’re huge granny, twice the size of ours!”** Tegan did not like to lose, least of all to Henry Weir! Everyone on the islands knew he was a mean spirited old cheat.





As her granny tucked young Tegan into bed that night, she did her best to think of something to soothe her mood,

“come on now Tegan, let’s not let this get us down. There’s still two days until the competition, maybe our courgettes will have grown much bigger by then.”

“Well maybe,” grumped Tegan, arms folded and frowning. **“But nothing that will compare to Henry Weirs. He cheats you know!”**, said Tegan, and granny did know.



All the islanders knew that the finest fertilizer for growing courgettes is goat manure; and with so many goats on the island, it used to be easy to come by. In the run up to the competition Henry would follow the goats round for months collecting every one of their droppings. This did mean that he ended up with three sheds crammed full of more than he could ever use, but to Henry it was worth it. And there was nothing in the rules to stop him.





The next morning Tegan was woken by the sound of two old ladies giggling like school girls with a silly secret. Still in her pyjamas she jumped out of bed and skipped out into the bright sunny garden to find out what was so funny. There she found Granny with her best friend Poppy, sitting next to her beloved courgettes, eating homemade blueberry ice cream. At 88, Poppy was one of the oldest people on the islands, with one of the youngest hearts. She was bright and childlike and always carried a guitar with her wherever she went. Songs blossomed like flowers around Poppy. Songs about everything and anything, from tying her shoes to waiting for her hens to lay eggs; watching the clouds; songs about songs; effortlessly and endlessly they came from her.

**“Ah good morning Tegan, my dear.
Would you like some blueberry ice cream?”**

“No thank you granny” said Tegan, **“what have you both been laughing about?”**
“Oh, em, he he!”, the two old ladies chuckled. **“Oh, play it for her Poppy, please”** asked granny. So Poppy picked up her guitar and among the giggles managed to sing a little song that went like this, **“grow like the sun’s not stopped shining today. And the rain is a song for you sung through the night, courgette flowers pretty, and the winning is easy, with never a goat’s poop in sight.”**



And with this the two of them broke into showers of laughter, **“ohh ho he he hah hah ha hee, oh, what’s the matter Tegan?”** said her granny, stopping as she saw Tegan was not laughing. Instead she was staring, open mouthed, **“my dear, what’s wrong, didn’t you like Poppy’s song?”**, as way of reply, she lifted her finger and pointed straight to where she was staring – the courgettes. – **“Look**, Tegan said, the two old ladies looked. **“Yes?”** they said, not quite understanding, **“look!”** Tegan said again. **“When you sing that song, the courgettes grow bigger!”**, **“are you sure?”** granny asked, Poppy played one more time and sure enough, the courgettes grew, a tiny, tiny amount, but certainly, they were bigger. **“See! See!”** cried Tegan in an explosive dance of hand claps and hopping.



“Right” said granny nodding, as she formulated a plan, **“the final of the competition is tomorrow. We’re going to have to sing our socks off if we’re to be sure to win.”** So the three of them sang the courgette growing song over and over. They sang all day, into the evening and all through the night in shifts, each taking turns to sing while the others slept. They sang while they carried the courgettes down to the boat to take to Rum, and just to be sure they sang while they rowed.



They even sang as they carried the now huge vegetables into the village hall for the judges to inspect. **“and never a goat’s poop in sight”** they finished, laying their beautiful courgettes down on the table and smiling over to Henry Weir, whose courgettes, it had to be said, looked rather dull and weedy next to Tegan’s. And by the disgruntled look on his face, he could see it too.

An hour later and everyone from the islands were gathered outside Rum village hall, waiting anxiously to hear the result. Tegan, her granny and Poppy held hands and prayed as the judges made their way to the front of the crowd. Silence grew over everyone and the village mayor began talking into a small microphone, fittingly shaped and painted to look like a courgette. **“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for being here for the annual Muck, Eigg and Rum courgette growing competition. It is a great honour for me to announce this year’s winner.”** Breaths were held and eyes widened as he opened the envelope.

**“and the winner is....
Tegan Tanglebulb!”
“Hurrrahhh!”**,



cheered everyone, as Tegan’s hair was ruffled and tussled and she was thrown up into the air. Poppy sang and danced and kicked her heels, like 88 years old was 80 years away and granny, lifting Tegan into her arms hugged her close **“Well done Tegan, I’m so proud.”** she said.

By the time the celebrations had ended, the three girls were exhausted and rowing home they decided that for fear of the courgettes growing so big that they might sink the boat, they shouldn’t sing the courgette growing song any more. Tegan agreed, but it was such a happy catchy tune that she couldn’t help herself, and as she fell asleep against her granny’s side in the rocking boat, she quietly hummed it inside her head and drifted off to sleep. ...**“Grow like the sun’s not stopped shining today and the rain is a song for you...”**



 the end 

